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MEMORANDUM

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

URGENT ACTION

May 9, 1973

*Forward
at we
discussed*

MEMORANDUM FOR:

GENERAL SCOWCROFT

FROM:

WILLIAM L. STEARMAN *WLS*

SUBJECT:

Request for CIA/DIA Study on Effect
of Khmer Insurgent Victory

A key element in our rationale for continued heavy U.S. air operations in Cambodia is the argument that an insurgent/North Vietnamese victory might pose unacceptable security and psychological risks to the GVN and could upset the Vietnam Agreement. Defense Secretary Richardson for example made this argument in Congressional testimony on May 8.

A number of Congressional leaders reportedly dispute this contention. Using administration arguments on the current strength of ARVN, they claim that the GVN could withstand this threat and should be able to continue to live within the Agreement. We urgently need more information on the probable impact on South Vietnam of a Communist victory in Cambodia. We will need this material before the Senate votes on Cambodia assistance early next week.

Therefore, I strongly recommend that you authorize me to ask CIA and DIA jointly to produce a study on the consequences of and likely GVN reaction to an insurgent victory in Cambodia. Assuming that Hanoi would exercise predominant influence over a successor government (with or without Sihanouk), the paper should focus on the following questions:

-- How would the enemy's position in South Vietnam be strengthened logistically, politically and tactically by an insurgent victory?

-- Based partly on the pre-1970 experience, to what extent would the reopening of Kompong Som port ease enemy supply problems, and speed up its military timetable in Vietnam?

NSS, DIA,
OSD reviews
completed.

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-- What would be the GVN's likely response to an insurgent victory -- politically, diplomatically, and tactically? Subjectively, would it feel so threatened that, for example, it would intervene heavily in Cambodia or would balk at further progress towards a political settlement?

-- Objectively, do we think that the GVN could live with a Hanoi-dominated government in Phnom Penh and withstand the presumably increased threat to its security?

RECOMMENDATION:

That you authorize me to ask CIA and DIA to prepare the study described above.

Approve _____

Disapprove _____

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